Dewan's reply.—I thank you for your suggestions in regard to recruitment to the public service. As I have already told some of the members, the question of a Selection Board is continuing to engage the attention of Government. Government are not unaware of the advantages of having such a Board. But there are difficulties in the actual working of it. They are under consideration.

In regard to appointment in the Judicial Department, the High Court in making their recommendations will also consider the claims of gentlemen practising in the mofussil courts.

153. Improvement of the Public Service.

Mr. Padmanabha Pillai Krishna Pillai (Member, Vaikam Taluk) represented that the practice of giving extensions of terms to officers in service after completing their 55th year should be stopped. When an officer was given a pay of more than Rs. 50, Government should satisfy themselves that he was a man of character and would not resort to bribery.

The Member then pointed out that bribery existed on a large scale in all the Departments of the State except the Education, Anchal and Military Departments and that it was on the increase. The existence of this evil in these days of advanced education was a regrettable feature and it should be instantaneously stamped out by all possible means. Heads of Departments should be asked to report cases of bribery on the part of their subordinates and such subordinates should be visited with exemplary punishment. A board composed of officials and non-officials should be instituted to help Heads of Departments in detecting cases of bribery. All public servants should be enjoined to keep accounts of their income and expenditure and these should be scrutinised by the superior officers.

Dewan's reply.—I am sorry to hear from you that, in your opinion, corruption is on the increase in the public service in Travancore. I am also sorry to hear from you that, in the old days, corruption used to be put down and that nowa-days it is not being put down to the same extent. I am not prepared to make any dogmatic statement. You may remember that another Member said that, in the matter of punishing a public servant, every opportunity should be given to him to prove his innocence. In the case of officials drawing above a certain pay, there is a Regulation which requires that a regular enquiry should be held before he is punished beyond a certain measure. It is a recognised principle of all civilised Governments that an opportunity should be given to the man who is considered to be guilty of corruption or of any serious fault to prove his innocence. It is possible that 9 out of 10 really guilty people escape, but it is better that a hundred guilty people should escape than that one innocent man should be punished. Probably because that principle is applied in practice, it is found more difficult nowa-days to punish corrupt officials than in the old days when justice was more summary. However, I am sorry to hear that corruption exists to a large extent, and if what you say is correct, I trust that more vigilance would be used by the Heads of Departments and corruption put down.

The other matters mentioned by you have already been referred to by Mr. Kumara Pillai. The general principle regarding extension of service is that it is never granted without due necessity. Your suggestions will be considered.

In regard to Selection Boards, I have already replied.

The other suggestions which you have made equally with the other members will receive the attention of Government.

154. Inequalities in the Public Service.

Mr. Narayanan Madhavan Kartavu (Member, Shertallai Taluk) observed that the scramble for public service lay at the root of all the existing trouble in the country. The census figures were somewhat misleading. The Christians in whose ranks there were as many sects and creeds as there were in other communities, included a large number of converts who were not benefited by official patronage, whereas under 'Nairs' sub-castes which, strictly speaking, formed part of that community were not included. Relying on the census figures and taking into consideration

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the total population of the State and the proportion which each community bore to the same, it would be seen that out of 563 appointments included in the Civil List, carrying a salary of Rs. 100 and above, Christians were eligible only for 165 appointments and the Brahmins 9. But as a matter of fact, Christians held 171 and Brahmins 216 appointments respectively. Out of the 171 appointments thus held by Christians, the bulk was enjoyed by the Jacobite Syrians who were numerically inferior as compared with certain other sections of the community. If the separation of Devaswoms from the Land Revenue Department was to be effected with the avowed object of giving more appointments to the Christian community, it would be inequitable, especially because Christians were pleading for equality in the public service.

As regards the Nairs, it was sad to note that they held only 119 appointments. Most of the Pandaravagai properties were those that escheated to the Sirkar from Nair families. In the circumstances, the Member prayed that the inequality noticed above in the case of his community should be removed.

The system of competitive examinations in the matter of recruitment to the public service was condemned by the Member on the ground that its introduction would lead to hardship. A definite percentage of appointments should be set apart for each community. He also prayed that the appointments in the Devaswom Department should not be taken into account as Government appointments for the above purpose.

Dewan's reply.—I must thank you for the interesting speech you have made. The matter referred to is one which is receiving the attention of Government, and as you know, it is a vexed question. All your remarks will be carefully borne in mind.

155. Share of Government appointments for Christians in South Travancore with special reference to the lower ranks.

Mr. Simeon Fletcher (Member, Nominated) began by saying that he confined himself to the case of the Christian community in South Travancore and their entertainment in the non-gazetted staff or lower ranks. His prayer for the better encouragement of the community in the matter of entertainment in the public service chiefly rested on the fact that the adoption of such a policy by the Government would be a powerful stimulus to the spread of education among the members of the community. The Christians in South Travancore were not behind other communities in the matter of number, literacy or material advancement; nay, they were even ahead of them in those respects. Still their share in the public service was considerably small. The Land Revenue service was closed to them. As regards other Departments like the Police, Public works, Anchal, Judicial, etc., there too the number of Christians employed was very small. This stepmotherly treatment meted out by Government to the Christian community in South Travancore had the effect of driving many an educated youth to seek his fortunes in distant places like Ceylon, Burma and Singapore. A large number of them were also working in the hills. The Christians suffered considerably for lack of official patronage. The most effective means of securing a fair representation of all communities in the public service was to fix a definite proportion of appointments for each community. It would not be too much, he said, if a proportion not less than 15 per cent of the lower ranks of the public service was fixed for the Christians in South Travancore.

Dewan's reply.—I am sorry that I cannot give you any other reply than what I have already given to other Members. The improvement of the methods of recruitment is engaging the attention of Government.

The Assembly adjourned at 5-45 P. M.

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